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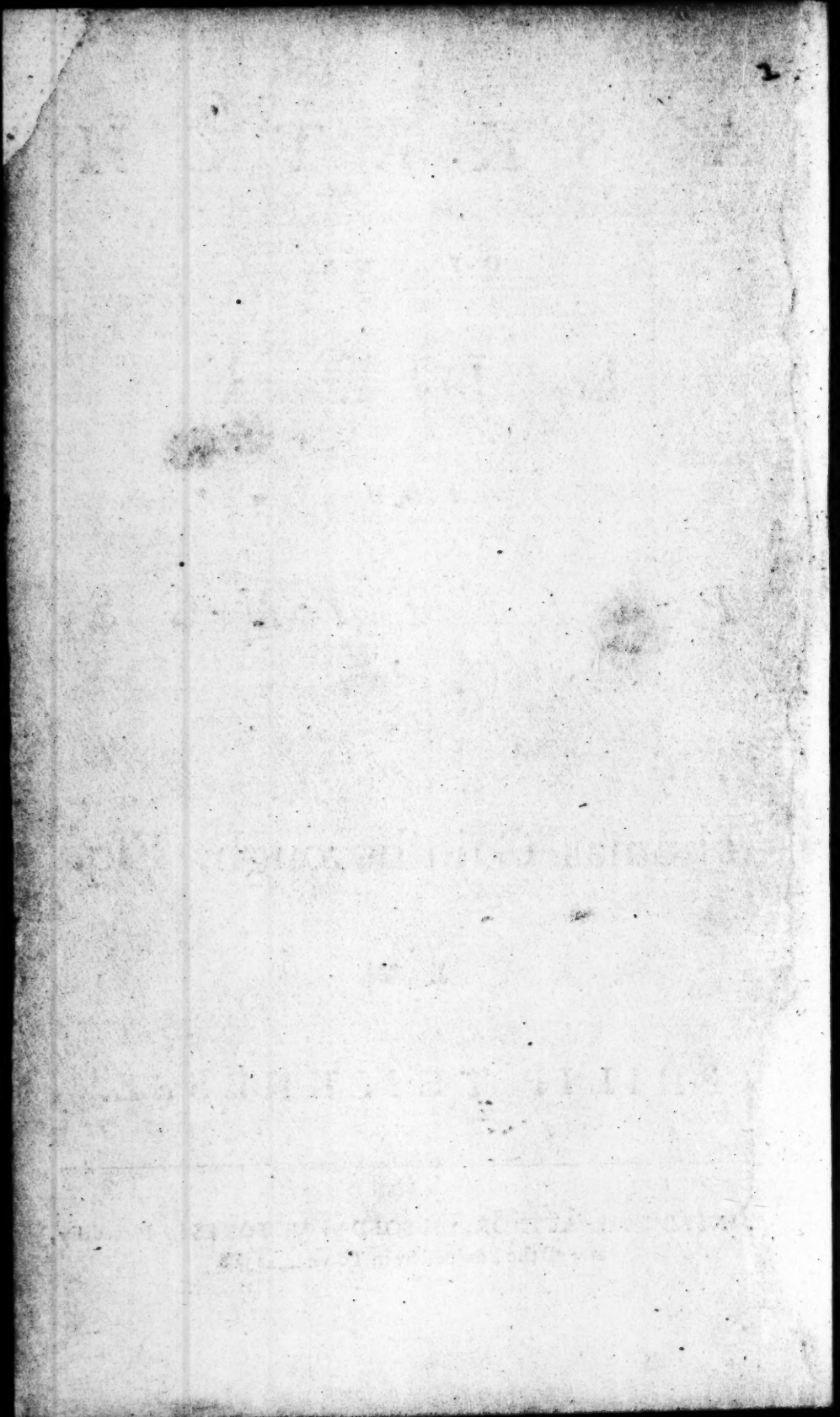
O F

Thomas Gainsborough, Esq.

B Y

PHILIP THICKNESSE.

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and all the Booksellers in Town. 1788.



ANECDOTES, &c.

IF an intimate acquaintance, and a most affectionate regard for upwards of thirty five years, with the lately departed, excellent, and first Artist as a Painter, Britain ever produced, could be deemed a qualification to write memoirs of his life and Paintings, so far, and no further, I am competent to the task I have undertaken; but to do Mr. Gainborough justice, it requires a pen, equal to his own inimitable pencil, to hold forth the powers it possessed, or the tender feelings of his heart, a task I am by no means adequate to, but as I can with truth boast, that I was the first man who per-

ceived; though through clouds of bad colouring, what an accurate eye he possessed, and the truth of his drawings, and who dragged him from the obscurity of a Country Town, at a time that all his neighbours were as ignorant of his great talents, as he was himself, I may justly claim the pleasure, (or vanity it may be called) of holding forth his merits, since they have been seen, admired, and acknowledged by all lovers of the Arts, and envied even by the FIRST ARTISTS his Cotemporarys; for tho' many may excel in fine out lines, good likenesses, decorated with chaste, elegant, and high finished borrowed drapery in portrait painting, I will venture to affirm, that no man living in this Kingdom, nor do I believe

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in any other, possessed a genius so great, or so universal as Mr. Gainsborough, for whether on Portraits, Landscapes, modelling, or Mechanics, all his doings were equally excellent. This ingenious man was born in the year 1727 at Sudbury in Suffolk, his Father, who was a Clothier, and a Dissenter in that Town, had a very large family, and could only bestow an education sufficient, to put them in a way of providing for themselves, and he had sense enough to perceive it was all they wanted, for all his children were wonderfully ingenious, I was about to say, all *equally* ingenious. Mr. Gainsborough, like the best Poets, was born a Painter, for he told me, that during his *Boy-hood*, though he had no Idea of becoming

coming a Painter then, yet there was not a Picturesque clump of Trees, nor even a single Tree of beauty, no, nor hedge row, stone, or post, at the corner of the Lanes, for some miles round about the place of his nativity, that he had not so perfectly in his *mind's eye*, that had he known he *could use* a pencil, he could have perfectly delineated. I say had he *known he could use a pencil*, for he could, and did use one the *first time* he took it up in such manner, that the first effort he made with one, is of a group of Trees now in my possession, and they are such as would not be unworthy of a place at this day, in one of his best landscapes. At the same time that he gave me this, his MAIDEN DRAWING, it was accompanied with

with a great many sketches of Trees, Rocks, Shepherds, Plough-men, and pastoral scenes, drawn on slips of paper, or old dirty letters, which he called *his riding School*, and which have all been given, borrowed, or *taken away* from me, except his *first wonderful Sketch*, which would have been gone also, but that I had pasted it in a M. S. bound book of music, composed and written by my affectionate and departed brother; and as it is a wonderful performance even for a professed Master of the art of drawing, it shall be left with the publisher of this book ten days, for the inspection of the curious, and the confirmation of the truth of what I have advanced. Thus finding the bent of his genius, he went very young to London, where,

where, by the assistance of his father; the powers of his genius, his modest deportment, and the elegance of his person; he obtained what is called in general, *many friends*, and by attending a drawing Academy, greatly improved his natural talents; but being, as I said above, of a modest, shy, reserved disposition, which continued with him till his death, he had not formed any high Ideas of his own powers, but rather considered himself as one, among a crowd of young Artists, who might be able in a country town (by turning his hand to every kind of painting) pick up a decent livelihood. When he obtained his nineteenth year, he met with a very pretty Scots girl, of low birth
 who

who by the luck of the day, * had an annuity settled upon her for life of two hundred pounds a year, to this girl he offered his hand and his heart, which perhaps no other woman of any fortune would at that time have refused, & then with his pretty wife, he retired to Ipswich in Suffolk, took a small house of six pounds a year in that Town, and considered himself happily settled for life. Soon after his remove to Ipswich I was appointed Lieutenant Governor of Land Guard Fort, not far distant, and while I was walking with the *then* printer and editor of the Ipswich journal, in a very pretty town garden of his, I perceived a melancholy faced countryman, with his arms locked together,

B leaning

* No reflection is meant here on Mrs. Gainborough's virtue.

leaning over the garden wall, I pointed him out to the printer, who was a very ingenious man, and he with great gravity of face, said the man had been there all day, that he pitied him, believing he was either mad, or miserable. I then stepped forward with an intention to speak to the *mad man*, and did not perceive, till I was close up, that it was a *wooden man* painted upon a shaped board. Mr. Creighton (I think that was the printer's name) told me I had not been the only person this inimitable deception had imposed upon, for that many of his acquaintance had been led even to speak to it, before they perceived it to be a piece of art, and upon finding the artist himself lived in that town, I immediately procured his address, visited

ted Mr. Gainsborough, and told him I came to chide him for having imposed a shadow instead of a substance upon me. Mr. Gainsborough received me in his painting room, in which stood several portraits truly drawn, perfectly like, but stiffly painted, and worse coloured; among which was the late Admiral Vernon's, for it was not many years after he had taken Porto Bello, with six ships *only*, but when I turned my eyes to his little landscapes, and drawings, I was charmed, those were the works of fancy and gave him infinite delight; MADAM NATURE, not MAN, was then his only study, and he seemed intimately acquainted with that BEAUTIFUL OLD LADY. Soon after this, the late King passed by the garrisons under my com-

mand, and as I wanted a subject to employ Mr. Gainsborough's pencil in the landscape way, I desired him to come and eat a dinner with me, and to take down in his pocket book, the particulars of the Fort, the adjacent hills, and the distant view of Harwich, in order to form a landscape of the Yatches passing the garrison under the salute of the guns, of the size of a pannel over my chimney piece, he accordingly came, and in a short time after, brought the picture. I was much pleased with the performance, and asking him the price? he modestly said, he hoped I would not think fifteen guineas too much, I assured him that in my opinion it would, (if offered to be sold in London,) produce double that sum, and accordingly

cordingly paid him, thanked him, and lent him an excellent fiddle; for I found, that he had as much taste for music, as he had for painting, though he had then, never touched a musical instrument, for at that time he seemed to envy even my poor talents as a fiddler, but before I got my fiddle home again, he had made such a proficiency in music, that I would as soon have painted *against him*, as to have attempted to fiddle *against him*. I believe however it was what I had said about the landscape, and *Thomas Peartrees head*, which first induced Mr. Gainborough to suspect (for he only suspected it) that he had something more in him, which might be fetched out, he found he could fetch a good tone out of my fiddle, and
 why

why not out of his own *Palate?* the following winter, I went to London, and I suspected, for like Mr. Gainsborough, I only suspected, that my landscape had uncommon merit, I therefore took it with me, and as Mr. Major the Engraver, was then just returned from Paris, and esteemed the first artist in London in his way, I shewed it to him; he admired it so much, that I urged him for both their sakes as well as mine, to engrave a plate from it, which he seemed very willing to undertake, but doubted whether it would by its sale (as it was only a perspective view of the Fort) answer the expence; to obviate which, I offered to take ten guineas worth of impressions myself; he then instantly agreed to do it. The impression,

pression will shew the merit of both artists, but alas! the picture, being left against a wall which had been made with salt water mortar, is perished and gone. That engraving made Mr. Gainsborough's name known beyond the circle of his country residence, and he was soon after by me, and several of his friends, urged to remove to Bath, and try his talents at portrait painting, in that fluctuating city, at which time I had a house there and resided during the winters. After his arrival at Bath, I accompanied him in search of lodgings, where a good painting room as to light, a proper access, &c. could be had, and upon our return to my house, where his wife was impatiently waiting the event, he told her he had seen lodgings

ings of fifty pounds a year, in the church yard, which he thought would answer his purpose. The poor woman, highly alarmed, fearing it must all come out of her annuity, exclaimed fifty pounds a year Mr. Gainfborough! why are you going to throw yourself into a gaol? but upon my telling her, if she did not approve of the lodgings at fifty pounds a year, he should take a house of an hundred and fifty, and that I would pay the rent if he could not, *Margaret's* alarms were moderated.

As at that time I was better known, and better loved at Bath, than I am at this, *though I am a very innocent and unoffending man, except to Rogues and Rascals.* My head was to be held up as the decoy duck,

duck, but the first sitting (not above fifteen minutes) is all that has ever been done to it, and in that state it hangs up in my house at this day; business came in so fast, at five guineas *a head*, that though he did not much mend in his colouring, or style, yet he was obliged to raise his price from five to eight guineas, and therefore I would not take up his time to finish mine, and perhaps too the finishing would not have mended it, the likeness, he could not: It is scarce necessary to say how rapidly, nor how justly, he raised his price from eight guineas, till he fixed it at forty for a half length, and an hundred for a full one; but before I proceed further, I cannot help relating a very singular and extraordinary circumstance,

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stance,

stance, which arose between him, Mrs. Thicknesse, and myself; for though it is very painful for me to reflect on, and much more so to relate, it turned out fortunately for him, and thereby lessened my concern, as he certainly had never gone from Bath to London, had not this untoward circumstance arose between us; and it is no less singular, that I, who had taken so much pains to remove him from Ipswich to Bath, should be the cause, twenty years afterwards, in driving him from thence! I believe I may venture to say, that all great genius's are a little allied to a kind of innocent madness, and there certainly was only a very thin membrane which kept this wonderful man within the pale of reason. He had asked me
when

when he first went to Bath, to give him the portrait of a little Spanish girl painted upon copper, with a guittar in her hand, and one feather in her hair, a picture now at his house in Pall-Mall, the study of which, he has often told me, made him a Portrait painter, and as he afterwards painted Mrs. Thicknesses full length, before she was my wife, he rolled it up in a landscape of the same size, and of his own pencil, and sent it me to London by the waggon. I was much surprised at the first opening of it! to see the head of a large oak tree, instead of Mrs. Thicknesses head, but I soon found between the two pictures, a note as follows. “ Lest
 “ Mrs. Thicknesses picture should have
 “ been damaged in the carriage to town,

“ this landscape is put as a case to protect
“ it, and I now return you many thanks
“ for having procured me the favor of
“ her sitting to me for it, it has done me
“ service, and I know it will give you
“ pleasure.”

During our residence at Bath, he had often desired me to sit to him for a companion to it, which I as often declined; not because I should not have felt myself and my person too, highly flattered, but because I owed Mr. Gainsborough so much regard, esteem, and friendship, that I could not bear he should toil for nothing, knowing how hard he worked for profit. However, during the last year of his residence at Bath, he *fell in love* with Mrs.

Thicknesses

Thicknesses VIOL DI GAMBA, and often, when he drop'd in to my house and took it up, offered me an hundred guineas for it; at that time I had reason to believe I might *not find it inconvenient*, ever to remove from my own house in the Crescent, and observing to Mrs. Thickness how much he admired her Viol, that he had some very good ones of his own, and that she might at any time have the use of either, she consented to give him an instrument made in the year 1612, of exquisite workmanship, and mellifluous tone and which was certainly worth an hundred guineas. * We then asked him and his family to supper with us, after which

Mrs.

* After the death of my daughter, it was sold to Mr. Brodrep for forty guineas.

Mrs. Thicknesse putting the instrument before him, desired he would play one of his best lessons upon it; this I say was *after supper*, for till poor Gainsborough had got a little borrowed courage (such was his natural modesty) that he could neither play *nor Sing!* He then played, and charmingly too, one of his dear friend *Abel's* lessons, and Mrs. Thicknesse told him he deserved the instrument for his reward, and desired his acceptance of it, but said at your leisure, give me my husband's picture to hang by the side of my own. An hundred full length pictures bespoke, could not have given my grateful and generous friend half the pleasure, a pleasure in which I participated highly, because I knew with what delight he would *sagg* through

through the day's work; to rest his cunning fingers at night over Abel's compositions, and an instrument he so highly valued. Gainsborough was so transported with this present, that he said " keep me hungry!—keep me hungry! and do not send the instrument till I have finished the picture." The viol di gamba however was sent the next morning, and the same day he stretched a canvass, called upon me to attend, and he soon finished the head, rubbed in the dead colouring, of the full length, painted my Newfoundland dog at my feet; and then it was put by, and no more said of it, or done to it. After some considerable time had passed Mrs. Thicknesse, and I called one morning at his house, Mr. Gainsborough invited

ted her up into his picture room, saying madam I have something above to shew you. Now the reader will naturally conclude, as she did, that it was some further progress upon my picture, which as it was last left, had something of the appearance (for want of light and shade in the drapery) of a drowned man ready to burst, or rather of a ragged body which had been blown about upon a gibbet on Hounslow Heath, for the dog's head, and his masters, were the only parts that betrayed the pencil of so great a master. But upon Mrs. Thicknesses entering the room she found it was to shew her, Mr. Fischer's portrait, painted at full length, compleatly finished, in scarlet and gold, like a Colonel of the foot guards, and
mine

mine standing in its *tatter a ragg* condition by the side of it! Mrs. Thicknesse knew this was a picture *not to be paid for*, and that it was begun and compleated *after mine*. She would have rejoiced, to have seen an hundred pictures finished before mine, that were to be paid for, but she instantly burst into tears, retired, and wrote Mr. Gainborough a note, desiring him to put my picture up in his garret, and not let it stand to be a foil to Mr. Fischer's; he did so, and as instantly sent home the viol di gamba! Upon my meeting Mr. Gainborough, I believe the next day, I asked him how he could have acted so very imprudently? and observed to him that it was not consistent with his usual delicacy, nor good sense, that even

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if

if he had made a foolish bargain with her, yet it was a bargain, and ought to be fulfilled, for I must own, that had he been a man I loved less, I too should have been a little offended. Now reason and good sense had returned to my friend, I own said he I was very wrong, not only in doing as I did, but I have been guilty also of a shameful indelicacy in accepting the instrument which Mrs. Thicknesses fingers from a child had been accustomed to, but my admiration of it, shut out my judgment, and I had long since determined to send it her back with the picture, and so I told Mr. Palmer (and so he did) adding, pray make my peace with Mrs. Thickness, and tell her I will finish your picture in my very best manner, and send it her home forthwith. In a few days after,

after, we three met, and they two shook hands and seemed as good friends as ever; but, days, weeks, and months passed and no picture appearing, either at his house or mine, I began to think it then became my turn to be a little angry too; for I suspected, and I suspected right, that he had determined never to touch it more! and I wrote him a letter and told him so, adding, that Mrs. Thicknesse was certainly entitled to the picture, either from his JUSTICE or his GENEROSITY! that I would not give a farthing for it, as a mark of his justice, but if he would send it to me from his generosity unfinished as it was, I should feel myself obliged to him; *and he sent it as it was!* Nothing but knowing the goodness of his

heart, the generosity of his temper, and the particularities of *his mind*, could ever have made me, even speak to him again, after having given me so deadly a blow, for it was a DEADLY ONE; but I knew, though it seemed *his act*, it did not originate *with him*; he had been told that I had said openly in the public coffee-house at Bath, that when I first knew him at Ipswich, his children were running about the streets there without shoes or stockings; but the Rascal who told him so, was the Villain who robbed the poor from the plate he held at the church door for alms! That Mr. Gainborough did not believe me capable of telling so gross a falsehood, I have his authority to pronounce, for he told me what he said in return. I acknowledge

nowledge said he, I owe many obligations to Mr. Thicknesse, and I know not any man from whom I could receive acts of friendship with more pleasure, and then made this just remark. I suppose, said he, the Doctor knew I now and then made you a present of a drawing, and he meanly thought, by setting us at variance, he might come in for one himself.

The first time I met Mr. Gainsborough after he had presented me with my own unfinished picture, I saw that concern and shame in his face, which good sense, an upright heart, and conscious errors, always discover. I did not lament the loss of his finishing strokes to *my Portrait*, but I grieved that it had ever been began; he desired I would not let any other painter touch

touch it, and I solemnly assured him, it should never be touched, it had I said been *touched* enough, and so had I, and then the subject was dropt; but every time I went into the room where that scare-crow hung, it gave me so painful a sensation, that I protest it often turned me sick, and in one of those sick fits, I desired Mrs. Thicknesse would return the picture to Mr. Gainsborough, and that as she had set her heart upon having my full length portrait, I would rather give Mr. Pine his fifty guineas for painting it, than be so daily reminded and sicken'd at the sight of such a glaring mark of disregard from a man I so much admired, and so affectionately esteemed. This she consented to do, provided I would permit her

her to send with it a card, expressing her sentiments at the same time, to which I am sorry to say, I too hastily consented. In that card she bid him take his brush, and first rub out the countenance of the truest and warmest friend he ever had, and so done, then blot him forever from his memory. Upon the receipt of that note, he went directly to London, took a house in Pall-Mall at three hundred pounds a year rent, returned to Bath to pack up his goods and pictures, and sent me a note upon a slip of paper wherein he said. “ God bless you and yours, I “ am going to London in three days.”

Well knowing my Man, and having had so recent a proof his being *sometimes* capable of acting very injudiciously, I was
much

much alarmed, lest with all his merit and genius, he might be in London a long time, before he was properly known to that class of people, who alone could *essentially* serve him, for of all the men I ever knew, he possessed least of that worldly knowledge, to enable him to make his own way into the notice of the GREAT WORLD. I therefore wrote to Lord Bateman who knew him, and who admired his talents, stating the above particulars, and urging him at the same time for both our sakes, to give him countenance and make him known, that being all which was necessary. His Lordship for me, or both our sakes did so, and his remove from Bath to London proved as good a move, as it was from Ipswich to Bath.

Bath. It was not one, or two, ill judged actions, among a thousand great, good, and generous ones I knew him to be *guilty of*, which could break off our friendship, nor did he *back-ground-brush* my countenance as Mrs. Thicknesse had desired, for some years afterwards I asked him whether he had so done! no, no, said he, *colouring* (for he was a great colourist) one day or other, some of your family or friends will be glad of it, *but I now suspect it has had the brush, or the scissars, a fate many of his Portraits has met with, in the course of forty years.—Jealousy, or hatred, has occasioned many such murderous deeds!!* but those who best loved Mr. Gainborough, and whom he most loved, were unfortunately least welcome to his house,

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his

his table, or the good will of some part of his family; for he seldom had his own way, but when he was roused to exert a painful authority for it, and then he flew into irregularities, and sometimes into excess, for when he was once heated, either by passion, or wine, he continued unable and unwilling also, to do business at home, and at those times squandered away fifty times over, the money which an extra joint of meat, or a few bottles of port would have cost, to have entertained his friends *at home*. I mention this, because had it not been for such pitiful doings, he would have been still in all human probability, the delight of his friends, and the admiration of all the world, for years to come. *He* had so utter a disregard to money,

money, that *some body* smuggled up in a few years at Bath, five hundred pounds. Those who have *fat* to Mr. Gainſborough know, that he ſtood, not *fat* at his Palate, and conſequently, of late years at leaſt, five or ſix hours work every morning, tired him exceedingly, and then, when he went into the park for a little freſh air, or up into the city upon buſineſs, if he took a hackney coach to eaſe his tired limbs back again, he was obliged to be ſet down in St. James's Square, or out of the ſight of his own windows, for fear of *another ſet down* not ſo convenient either to his *head*, or his *heels*, as riding out twelve penny worth of coach hire, after having earned fifty guineas previously thereto! I have more than once been ſet

down by him in that manner, even when I was going to dine with him, and have more than once been told *by him why we were so set down!* If therefore I have told this tale too severely, let it be remembered, that I have lost a friend whom I sincerely loved; the public have lost a most valuable and Eminent artist, his numerous relations, (some of whom he generously maintained, and all of whom he affectionately loved) have lost their support; and therefore “ *let the stricken deer go weep*” while the Portraits of Lord Killmorrey, Mr. Quin, Mr. Medlicote, Mr. Mosey, Doctor Charlton, Mr. Fischer and Mrs. Thicknesse exist; his talents as a Portrait painter must be admired for their strong likenesses, elegance of attitude, and

and the PERMANCEY of their colouring. * These and many more were finished *before* he left Bath, and that of his MAJESTY GEORGE the THIRD, the QUEEN, the three Royal Sisters upon one canvas. The Prince of WALES, Colonel St. Ledger, Mr. Bates, and many others, painted *after* he was settled in London, will forever immortalize him as a perfect master of that art. The KING's Portrait and Mr. Bates, are perhaps the two most perfect Portraits of both face, and persons, that ever were delineated upon canvas, but great as those Portraits in particular are, and excellent as most of his pictures in that way are finished, it was necessity,

not

* Mrs. Thicknesse's picture was painted in the year 1761, and the colours though it has been carried all over Europe, are as vivid as the first day it was painted, I mention this as a hint to the Knight.

not choice, which drew him from his favorite study, the study of NATURE, and in those representations, let his pictures from nature *speak*, as they will, while canvas and oil can endure, and call forth the admiration of all beholders, and the imitation of all inferior artists. It would be impertinent to say more of his talents as a landscape painter, while there are so many *witnesses* in the world under his own *hand* of the intimacy and friendship, there was between him and dame Nature, for I may justly say;—NATURE sat to *Mr. Gainsborough* in all her attractive attitudes of beauty, and his pencil traced with peculiar and matchless felicity, her finest and most delicate linaments; whether from the sturdy oak; the twisted
eglantine,

eglantine, the mower whetting his scythe,
 the whistling plough boy; or the shepherd
 under the haw-thorn in the dale; all
 came forth equally chaste from his ini-
 mitable and fantastic pencil. But perhaps
 even the greatest part of this master's ge-
 nius is still unknown but to a few! After
 returning from the Concert at Bath, near
 twenty years ago, where we had been
 charmed by Miss Linley's voice, I went
 home to supper with my friend, who sent
 his servant for a bit of clay from the small
 beer barrel, with which he first modelled,
 and then coloured her head, and that
 too in a quarter of an hour, in such a
 manner that I protest it appeared to me
 even superior to his paintings! the next
 day I took a friend or two to his house to
 see

see it, but it was *not* to be seen, *the servant had thrown it down from the mantle piece and broke it*; but as I said above, all great genius is a little allied to something which common place understandings cannot comprehend! for I am well convinced that if I had asked him for five hundred pounds to save me from a gaol, I should not have gone to a gaol, but I am as thoroughly convinced, that no earthly consideration could have prevailed upon him (after what had passed) to have touched my picture again; but as enough has been said as to the merits of his pencil, I have only to add a few specimens of the benevolence of his heart. A gentleman and a friend of mine, had without letting me know his distress, shot himself in this city,

city, I found by some letters from a female which came into my hands from the CORONER that he was connected with a woman in London who had painted the distress of her mind, in those letters *a la Gainborough*, I wrote to her, and her reply to me was of the same cast, and meeting Mr. Gainborough going to the play when I had her letter in my hand, I shewed it to him; I saw the stifled tear ready to burst from his eyes and so quitted him, but instead of going to the play, he returned home, sent me a bank note in a letter, wherein he said, " I could
 " not go to the play till I had relieved
 " my mind by sending you the inclosed
 " bank note, which I beg you to transmit
 " to the poor woman by to morrow's
 F " post."

“ post.” His susceptible mind and his benevolent heart, led him into such repeated acts of generosity, that at *that* time, I know he was not rich, and I suppose he did not die, worth a tenth part of what he might have been possessed of, had he been a worldly minded man; a Humourist he certainly was, but in the most pleasant cast of that character, for when a certain rich citizen was sitting to him with his five guinea new powdered bob wig on, the *chap* looked so *rum*, and fat so very *pretty*, that poor Gainsborough found it impossible not to burst out in a fit of laughter, and while he was wishing for some occasion to plead his excuse, the Alderman desired him not to overlook the *dimple in his chin*; no power of face could stand

stand that;—Gainsborough burst forth in laughter, threw his pencil upon the ground, and said d—n the dimple in your chin, I can neither paint that nor your chin neither, and never touched the picture more; and when a certain Duchess sent to know *the reason why her picture was not sent home?* he gave it a *wipe* in the face with his *back-ground-brush*, and sent her word that her Grace was *too hard* for him, he could not he said paint it. That inellegant message, lost her an excellent representation of her beautiful person (for she *was* beautiful) and Gainsborough's spirit, deprived him of an hundred guineas. Vanity, or affectation, I care not which way it is construed, will not let me withhold a little domestic occurrence,

My departed daughter, who had some claim to genius with her pencil, and now and then obtained a hint of importance from Mr. Gainborough's, had prevailed upon him to give her a little faint tinted drawing of his to copy, from which, she made so exact a resemblance, that at a slight view, it was not readily distinguished from the original; one night, *but after supper*, at my house in town, she laid her copy before him, said nothing, but waited to hear what he would say, Gainborough instead saying any thing, took it up and instantly tore it through the middle! The truth was, inattention, good spirits, and a glass or two of wine, had so cheered him, that he thought it was his own, yet at the same time perceiv-

ing

ing that it was not quite so perfect as a work of *his* ought to be, he demolished it. It is scarce necessary to say, that he made her a *second* amends, for this compliment, by presenting her with another drawing which will never be torn, and *now* I consider that which was torn, as valuable as either. Having said thus much of my departed friend, I cannot lay down my pen without mentioning Mr. Dupont his surviving nephew and scholar, who has been fostered under his wing from a child, to his dying day, because I can venture to pronounce him a man of exquisite genius, little inferior in the line of a painter to his uncle, possessing an excellent heart, and a good understanding; and when his works are known, they cannot

cannot fail of being equally admired, and I hope and believe, if his own diffidence and modesty does not prevent him, that he will not remove from his late uncle's house, for I am sure he can support its former credit, either as a landscape or Portrait painter. If any one doubt it, I refer them to a portrait of his uncle, which I have not seen of many years, but which has all the ease, all the spirit, and all the fire in it, which might be expected in the Portrait of the first genius, as I have said above, either this, or in any other Kingdom ever produced, Mr. Gainsborough's father left eight children, Thomas was the youngest, three sons and five daughters, his sons were all wonderfully ingenious, his daughters handsome
and

and virtuous. The Rev. Mr. Gainborough who died a few years since at Henley ; was as much beloved as lamented, for he was not less ingenious as a mechanic, than his younger brother was in painting. After his death, my friend his brother gave me all his finished and unfinished works, among which is a clock now in my own house (not given by me as by mistake was mentioned in the gazetteer to the british Museum) of too curious a construction for me to attempt to describe, a sundial, a piece of work of great delicacy and of infinite labour, I did present to the british museum, but nothing could have induced me to part with it, but that it might be placed, as I told the Governors in a letter which accompanied it, where it would remain,

remain, a specimen of his genius, as long as brass or iron can endure, it was, as the clock is, all the work of his own hands, and I soon after received a letter from the Governors, thanking me for having enriched the British Museum with so great a curiosity, and there it may be seen with his name deep cut thereon, which I had done, previous to my sending it thither; it stands upon three brass claws like a mahogany table. Three sisters, and one brother of Mr. Gainborough's survive him, Mrs. Gibbons of Bath is the only one of his sisters, I am personally known to, and those who know Bath & Mrs. Gibbons, need not be told how respectable she is for her excellent understanding, and her exemplary life, two or three of his
 nieces

Nieces, Miss Gardeners are Milliners in Brock Street, Bath, and merit the notice of all those who wish to reward virtue, and patronize industry. This is a hasty sketch of my departed friend and his family, written in one day and finished in one respect only, like his best pictures, *i. e.* at *one sitting*, for I think the finest head he ever painted, was that of his nephew, Mr. Dupont, and that was never touched but once, and that once the work of one hour, I admired it exceedingly, he gave it to me, and it may now be seen in Lady Bateman's dressing room, at my Lord Bateman's house the corner of Park Lane. Mr. Gainborough, soon after his marriage, had two daughters only, who are both living, the youngest is married

to Mr. Fischer the celebrated performer on the OBOE, who was a most beautiful woman in her youth; the eldest is unmarried, between whom, he has divided his fortune, his wife having as observed above, an annuity for her life, far beyond what she has spirit to spend, or generosity to bestow till she can keep it no longer. A Cancer broke forth from his neck, and his family imagine he died without knowing the danger he was in, or what occasioned it, but the truth is, he did not chuse to know it, for he said to his Sister Gibbons, “ if this *be a Cancer* I am a dead man,” he then made his will, desired to be buried near his friend Kirby in Kew church yard, and to have his name *only* cut upon his monumental stone; he died in the
 fixty

fixty first year of his age, lamented by all who knew him, and has left a fame behind him which can NEVER DIE.

Since most part of these pages were printed off, I have seen a long and a very excellent account of Mr. Gainsborough and his paintings, in the gentleman's magazine for August last, there are however some trifling mistakes which I think ought to be rectified, as well as an omission of my own. In page thirteen, I have mentioned *Thomas Peartrees head*; (the head which so much attracted my notice in the garden at Ipswich,) without explaining as the magazine has done, the cause of its being painted, and which Mr. Gainsborough related, when I first visited him.

At the bottom of his Ipswich garden, grew a fine bergamot pear tree, and while Mr. Gainborough had his Palate and Brushes in his hand, *Thomas* was looking wishfully over the wall, and contemplating how he could come at some of the wind-falls, the sun shone just upon the top of Thomas's nose, and chin, while all the rest of his dejected countenance, appeared in shadow under his broad brimed hat, which so struck Mr. Gainborough's fancy (for such are the happy moments for poets and painters) that he snatched up his window shutter, and got *Thomas* into his *painting room*, before he had even tasted of the forbidden fruit. There is something so admirably well expressed in the magazine relative to Mr. Gainborough's peculiar
and

and superior manner of painting Portraits, that though I have always felt the truth of that observation, I could never account for it, and therefore I shall take the liberty of borrowing the editors own words, for I never yet saw any other portrait painter who painted the mind, nay, the very soul of the living man. “ He “ gives the feature and the shadow, so “ that it is sometimes not easy to say “ which is which; for the scumbling “ about the feature sometimes looks like “ feature itself; so that he shews the face “ in more points of view than one, and “ by that means it strikes every one who “ has once seen the original that it is a re- “ semblance; and while the portrait with “ a

“ a rigid outline exhibits the countenance
 “ only in one disposition of mind, his
 “ gives it in many.”

The Editor has very justly observed, that he failed in Mr. Garrick's Portrait, and so he did in Foote's also; and when I expressed my surprise, that he should have so done, he archly and instantly replied,
 “ *Rot them for a couple of Rogues, they*
 “ *have every Body's faces but their own.*” It was in one of those happy hours in which he painted *Thomas Peartrees head*, and that which he painted in one hour, and at one sitting of his ingenious nephew and scholar, Mr. Dupont, which as I said above, is in the possession of Lord Bateman, to whom I had the honor to present it, for the instant I saw it, I asked for it,
 and

and there was nothing I could ask of Gainsborough, which he could give (*except my own Portrait*) that he would have refused me. He gave me, after the death of his clergyman brother, all his finished and unfinished pieces of mechanism. The clock, an attempt at a perpetual motion, is not at the British Museum, but a most curious sun-dial is, and it is a piece of work worthy of notice; I parted with it reluctantly, but for reasons assigned above. The model of his steam engine met with the same fate as my landscape, I found it was too much perished, to be put in motion again, by being left exposed to the weather at his brother's house in Pall Mall. That engine alone would have furnished a fortune to all the Gainsboroughs
and

and their dependents, had not that unfuspicious, good hearted man, let a cunning, designing artist see it, and who surreptitiously carried it off in his *mind's eye*! The clock however, shall visit *its Cousin, the Sun Dial*, but not till *I have done going*. The spiral channel in which a gilt ball rolls, to point out the hour, is cut from a solid piece of brass, and I am told by a very great artist, that it is one of the truest and most accurate pieces of work he ever beheld. There is but one man now living whom I know, who can set this clock in motion, and that is the ingenious Mr. IRELAND, author of Henderson's life.

Mr. Gainsborough was not ignorant of his disorder, but *pretended* to be so, for
though

though he did not mention his suspicions to his children and Mr. Dupont, yet when his Sister Gibbons visited him, he said to her, " now if this be a Cancer, I am a " dead man," and then settled his affairs. I cannot conclude, without mentioning his only surviving brother, because with all the genius which in a PECULIAR MANNER this *unique* family came into the world; he alone is unfortunate, I never saw him but once, and that is more than twenty years ago, but passing through Sudbury where he has always resided, I visited him as a friend of his brothers, but previous to my seeing him, I had sat an hour with his wife, and I think seven daughters, it was on a Sunday morning, and I found them all clean, but cloathed

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in the most humble manner. These females *seemed all* endowed with good sense, but their countenances, even the children were overcast with distress. I had taken an opportunity to give the eldest daughter a guinea (for I knew the character of the father) before he appeared, but the mother perceiving what I had done, said, God certainly sent you sir, for we have a piece of beef for dinner, but we have no bread to eat with it, I was shocked at this information, and asked her whether Mr. Gainborough, her brother did not assist them, O yes! said she he often sends us five guineas, but the instant my husband gets it, he lays it all out in brass work to discover the longitude. At that instant her longitudinal husband appeared,
 he

he would not suffer me even to tell him my name, or that I was a friend of his brother's, but brought forth his curious brass work, and after shewing me how *nearly* it was compleated, observed that he *only wanted* two guineas to buy brass to compleat it. I could hardly determine whether his deranged imagination, or his wonderfully ingenuity, was most to be admired, but I informed him that I had not capacity to conceive the genius of his unfinished work; and therefore wished him to shew me such as were compleated, he then shewed me a cradle which rocked itself, a cuckoo, which would sing all the year round, and a wheel that turned round in a still bucket of water! he informed me, that he had visited Mr. Harrison

rison and his time piece, but said he, Harrison *made no account of me* in my shabby coat, for he had Lords and Dukes with him, but after he had shewn *the Lords* that a *great motion* to the machine, would no ways effect its regularity, I whispered him to give it *a gentle motion*, Harrison started; and in return, whispered him to stay, as he wanted to speak to him, after the rest of the company were gone, I then took my leave of this very eccentric and unfortunate man, without giving him the two guineas he solicited, and now lament that he has lost the aid of his excellent brother, for alas! without aid he cannot subsist, and must be verging upon, if not fourscore years of age, for I think he said he was twenty years older
than

than his youngest brother. When a man at Colchester had made the first smoak jack, this curious man walked over to see it, but the maker, prudently refused him, observing that probably he was an Artist himself, it is true said Gainborough I am, and then asked him what weight his jack would roast, a whole sheep replied the artist, then said Gainborough I will go home and make one that will roast a whole Ox, and did so! ARTISTS; *and ye* LOVERS OF THE ARTS, I ask you, should such a man as this, and the brother to the IMMORTAL THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH, want ROAST MEAT, or bread to eat with it? GOD FORBID.

✍ Mrs. G. has a great number of drawings, some of which are of Mrs. Fischer's pencil, which she *hoarded up*, observing *justly*, that they would fetch a *deal* of money when *Tom was dead*—A deal of good may they do her.

F I N I S.

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whole ox, and but for artists and the
lovers of the arts, I ask you, should
such a man as this and his brother to the
innocent Thomas Gainsborough.
well heartily, offered to cut with
his GOD FORBID.

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